OrchKids would like to dedicate this issue of OrchPress to our late friend, the honorable Congressman Elijah Cummings. Congressman Cummings was a powerful advocate for youth in Baltimore City and a dedicated supporter of our program. In addition to attending performances, visiting with students, and writing letters of support for OrchKids (just to name a few), Congressman Cummings understood how important it was to share our work and our successes with others in order to touch as many lives as possible. Last Spring the Congressman spoke directly to students following their performance at the Library of Congress. After expressing how proud he was of their hard work and perseverance, he called on them to spread the word. “When you go home today,” he said, “I want each and every one of you to tell one person who doesn’t know about OrchKids what you did today and how it made you feel. Share your joy of playing music with someone else. Tell them what being in OrchKids has meant to you.”

Congressman Elijah Cummings: A Powerful Legacy

OrchKids believes in the power of music. We, also, believe in the power of connection and community. And we believe that music has the power to help build strong connections and strong communities; giving people hope for a future full of possibility. That’s why we travel across the country, sharing what we do.

A key focus of the OrchKids’ mission is accessibility. We believe that every student deserves access and the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and by doing so, they become the change needed to make our world better. One way we share our mission and make our model accessible to the greater community is by presenting at conferences and symposiums nationwide.

This past July, OrchKids team members Camille Delaney McNeil, Director of Programs; Khandeya Sheppard, Senior Program Manager; and Mollie Westbrook, Senior Program Manager, presented at the 2019 Youth Orchestra Los Angeles National Symposium. This symposium brings together educators, administrators, advocates, and key stakeholders from other music for social change programs around the country to share best practices. OrchKids has had a longstanding relationship with YOLA - sending students to their Take A Stand music festival in the summer - and we were excited to present at their National Symposium.

OrchKids runs a workshop on Collective Composition and Improvisation; facilitating youth voice and leadership through collaboration. Through group exercises, the team worked with participants on reframing and restructuring hierarchy in classroom dynamics; promoting more creative thought. Participants left with a concrete, fundamental toolkit to use immediately in their respective programs in order to foster community with youth-voice at the center. Afterwards, many participants reached out to OrchKids for follow up questions and further resources. It was exciting to see so many individuals eager to put our methodology to use!

Closer to home, OrchKids’ Executive Director, Raquel Whiting Gilmer, presented at the John F. Kennedy Center’s REACH opening festival. The REACH is more than a physical expansion of the nation’s cultural center, it’s a new way of imagining the intersection between audience and art. Raquel was a panelist alongside other leaders of El-Sistema inspired programs, like OrchKids, preceding the screening of the film.

Spreading the Word, One Note at a Time!

OrchKids Senior Program Manager, Mollie (center), presenting at YOLA National Symposium

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Spreading the Word, One Note at a Time! Continued

“El-Sistema” - a documentary telling the story of the El-Sistema movement. Raquel shared with the audience the challenges that are specific to Baltimore and how OrchKids has adjusted its programming over the years to best meet the specific needs of our community. OrchKids offers more than just music education, we provide students with professional development, mentorship and leadership opportunities, enrichment classes, student-lead performance opportunities, tutoring, healthy snacks and meals, and a plethora of resources from interview preparation to outside program opportunities (i.e. Interlochen Summer Arts Camp, Peabody Preparatory, Indiana University Summer Music Clinic, etc.)

Being considered a leader in the music for social change movement, OrchKids has a duty to share our expertise and our stories with others in order to foster greater connectivity and build stronger communities for the students we all serve. Connecting, inspiring and giving back– these are all traits that we shared with our friend, Congressman Cummings, and we will continue to build on his powerful legacy.

OrchKids Executive Director, Raquel (left), presenting at The Kennedy Center’s REACH Opening Festival

OrchKids students performing at the National Coalition of Girls Schools’ Educating Girls Symposium

New Beginnings! - OrchKids New Sites: The Belair-Edison School, left three, and Mount Royal Elementary/Middle School, right two

Meet The Fellows!

OrchKids Fellows and Maestra Marin Alsop after orientation. From left to right: Christy Grace, Maestra Alsop, Maddi Bohman, Autumn England, and Daniel Morrison.

OrchKids Fellowship Program is growing! Last year, OrchKids piloted a new string fellowship program to help attract great string teachers who are not only talented, but more importantly, share a deep passion for our mission of social change. Fellow, Christy Grace, now in her second year, has become the program’s lead fellow and mentor. Christy’s role has also expanded to overseeing another pilot program: OrchKids’ new Saturday private lesson academy. This new initiative aims to provide extra support for our students’ musical growth. We are, also, excited to announce that out of a pool of 16 applicants, OrchKids has accepted three new Fellows to join our team this year. Like Christy, this new class of Fellows will spend the next two years gaining significant teaching experience in the Baltimore community, as well as professional development in nonprofit administrative roles and performance cultivation.

Fellows will teach in both private and large group settings, embracing OrchKids’ educational philosophy. In addition to teaching, they will organize, curate, and perform with students in at least one community concert each year, developing entrepreneurial skills as they use their art to connect with local neighborhoods. Each month, Fellows will participate in 2-hour modules that will teach them nonprofit management skills in development, education/programming, operations, and marketing.

To fully embrace the OrchKids educational philosophy, Fellows will participate with teaching artists in all professional development seminars. Topics will include using music as a tool for social change, classroom management techniques, trauma-informed care, racism and implicit bias, and collaborative student composition.

►Meet The Fellows! Continued on Page 3
Meet The Fellows! Continued

Maddi Bohman, Violin
Hometown: York, PA

“H’m incredibly excited to be a String Fellow with OrchKids. Baltimore is a city that I now call home. There’s no better way to understand my home than to get to know the kids that live here and give them the tools and resources to be the best they can be. I can’t wait to teach and learn from my students, both musically and personally.”

Autumn England, Cello
Hometown: Moorhead, MN

“I am honored to have this opportunity to work with children and their families in Baltimore City. I am inspired to share the joys of music and utilize the power of art to create a more just society.”

Daniel Morrison, Trombone
Hometown: Kijabe, Kenya

“I am so excited to be living in Baltimore and working with OrchKids! I’m thankful to be on a team with such a strong sense of internal community and a deep desire to invest in our city’s future through making music and building deep connections with students.”

Where in The World Were OrchKids Last Summer?

American Music Camp, MD

Interlochen Summer Arts Camp, MI

Archipelago Summer Music Camp, MI

Ithaca College Summer Music Academy, NY

2019-2021 Fellows are sponsored in part by 5 Purple Oranges. Thank you for your generous gift!

Students & Chaperones Awaiting Flights!
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UPCOMING EVENTS:

• 12/5 Monument Lighting Ceremony, E Mt. Vernon Pl & N Charles St
• 12/10 Winter Concert @ Highlandtown Elementary/Middle #215
• 12/11 Marin Level Concert @ Mary Ann Winterling Elementary
  • 12/12 Winter Concert @ Mary Ann Winterling Elementary
  • 12/18 Winter Concert @ The Belair-Edison School
  • 12/19 Winterfest @ Booker T. Washington Middle